

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Revised 11 September 2008

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General Program Questions:

Q – When was Troops to Teachers created and who administers it?

A – Troops to Teachers (TTT) was established in 1994 as a Department of Defense program. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000 transferred responsibility for program oversight and funding to the U.S. Department of Education but continued operation by the Department of Defense. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provides for continuation of TTT. TTT is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), Pensacola, Florida.

Q – What is the purpose of the Troops to Teachers Program?

A – Reflecting the focus of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, TTT’s primary objective is to help recruit quality teachers for K-12 schools that serve low-income families throughout America. TTT helps relieve teacher shortages in subjects such as math, science, and special education, and assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.

Q – Why should I register in the Troops to Teachers program?

- A – TTT assists in several ways:
1. Pending availability of funds, financial assistance may be provided to eligible individuals as stipends up to \$5K to help pay for teacher certification costs or as bonuses of \$10K. Stipend and bonus recipients must agree to teach for three years in school locations that meet certain Department of Education criteria. The maximum amount of assistance is \$10K per person.
 2. Forty-nine states have Troops to Teachers offices providing representation at the state level specifically to assist our participants in their state.
 3. Our database, which is a nationwide referral system, is made available to school districts for the purpose of recruiting new teachers.
 4. School districts may post their vacancies directly on our Home Page.
 5. Participants may research school districts for available academic or vocational teaching positions.
 6. TTT helps relieve teacher shortages in subjects such as math, science, and special education, and assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.

Q – During working hours, how does the TTT phone system operate?

A – TTT’s phones ring in a circular hunt group that reaches several available lines. When all lines are busy or no one is available, calls are routed to our voicemail system. TTT’s normal business hours are 0700 to 1600 Central Time. Calls received during non-business hours automatically go to voicemail. If you leave a message, speak slowly and clearly, include your name, phone number, and purpose of call.

DSN
922-1241

TOLL-FREE
1-800-231-6242

COMMERCIAL
850-452-1241

Q – If calling TTT after duty hours, which specific extension should I dial for certain kinds of services or questions?

A – Counseling Matters: Extensions 3157, 3117, or 3156
Financial Issues: Extensions 3154 or 3162
General Program Info: Extension 3161
Homepage/Internet Issues: Extension 3156
Mini-Resume Postings: Extension 3216
Registration Process: Extensions 3148, 3158, or 3160
School/School District Staff: Extension 3163

Q – How can I locate a Troops to Teachers office for my state?

A – A TTT state office listing may be found at
http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/State_Office_Listing.pdf.

Eligibility Questions:

Q – Who is eligible to register in Troops to Teachers?

A – Those who meet one of the military requirements and one of the educational requirements listed below:

Military Requirements (an individual is eligible to participate in the program only if the last period of service was honorable):

Counseling, Referral Services and Financial Assistance:

1. Retired active duty and Selected Reserve personnel
2. Active duty who will retire within one year
3. Active duty or Selected Reserve personnel who separate on or after January 8, 2002 for physical disability who register with TTT within four years after separation
4. Currently serving in the Selected Reserve with at least ten years of creditable service toward retirement and willing to continue for an additional three years or until eligible for retirement
5. Military personnel who meet all of the following stipulations:
 - a. separated on or after January 8, 2002, with at least 6 years continuous active duty service;
 - b. who will transfer to the Selected Reserve within four years; and
 - c. are willing to commit to at least three years in the Selected Reserve or until eligible for retirement.

Counseling and Referral Services Only:

1. Military personnel who have at least six years of active duty and who separated on or after October 1, 1990
2. Current or separated members of the Selected Reserve with six or more years of creditable service toward retirement

Education Requirements

Academic Subject Teacher: Baccalaureate or advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution at the time of registration.

Vocational/Technical Teacher: Equivalent of one year of college with six years of military experience in a vocational or technical field or meet state requirements. Eligible for vocational referral and, if applicable, vocational certification expenses only.

See http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf for a complete discussion of eligibility criteria.

Q – Are there time restrictions for registering in the program?

A – Yes. Different limits apply to those seeking counseling and referral services than those seeking financial assistance. Specifically:

1. Counseling and referral services are available to retired military personnel, active duty personnel who separate with six or more years of service on or after 1 Oct 1990, or current or separated members of the Selected Reserve with six or more years of creditable service towards retirement. Individuals registering for counseling and referral assistance must meet the education and service requirements noted in the previous question.
2. Eligibility for Financial Assistance has the following time requirements:
 - a. Active duty and Selected Reserve personnel separated on or after 8 Jan 2002 for physical disability must register within four years after separation. Selected Reserve personnel who transition from active duty on or after 8 Jan 2002 must have served a minimum of six years on active duty immediately before separation and commit to three additional years with the Selected Reserve.

The various eligibility criteria are cited in depth at

http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf.

Q – Does my time in the inactive Reserve and the inactive National Guard count toward the program minimums?

A – No. The law stipulates that one's reserve time must have been in the Selected Reserve to meet the RC-2 category. See the [Eligibility Criteria](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf).
(http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf).

Q – I am a retired reservist. I no longer drill and will not receive any retirement dollars until I reach age 60. Am I eligible to register for TTT?

A – Yes, so long as you are retired, you are eligible to register for TTT. See category RC-1 at the [eligibility criteria](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf).

Q – I am a Vietnam-era veteran now enrolled in a teacher certification program. Do I qualify for funding for the Troops to Teachers program?

A – Possibly. The eligibility criteria at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/EligibilityCriteria.pdf list several categories that may confirm eligibility to participate, both for stipend or bonus funding, or for counseling and referral services. Alternatively, one may consult the TTT Self-Determination Guide at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/eligibility.asp.

Q – I have 9 and ½ years active duty service. I am planning to separate in six months. Am I eligible?

A – Possibly. If you separated from active duty on or after January 8, 2002 and commit to three years in the Selected Reserve, you will likely be eligible for TTT financial aid. If you do not enter the Selected Reserve, you will still qualify. With six or more years on active duty, you qualify for TTT's counseling and referral services. You must also meet minimum education requirements for TTT registration as a vocational or academic teacher. See the eligibility criteria at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/TTT/EligibilityCriteria.pdf.

Q – I have 9 years in the Selected Reserve. Am I eligible for TTT funding?

A – No, but you soon could be eligible for TTT funding. As a member of the Selected Reserve with nine years, you are eligible only for counseling and referral service. However, when you reach the ten-year mark, you could also make yourself eligible for a stipend or bonus by committing to an additional three years. Receipt of a stipend or bonus would also require that you commit to teach for three years in a targeted district or schoolhouse. You must also meet minimum education requirements for TTT registration as a vocational or academic teacher. See the eligibility criteria at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/TTT/EligibilityCriteria.pdf.

Q – I have separated with 6 years of Selected Reserve service. Am I eligible for TTT?

A – Yes, you would qualify to register with TTT for counseling and referral service as long as you have an honorable discharge and meet the education requirements.

Q – Are all retired military eligible to register for TTT?

A – Yes, regardless when retirement occurred, both retired active duty and Selected Reserve enlisted and officer personnel may register for TTT if they meet minimum education requirements for TTT registration as a vocational or academic teacher. Educationally, the program requires that you have a bachelor's degree or a minimum of one-year equivalent of college and 6 years of experience in a vocational/technical area. If you meet these requirements, financial assistance options are available, depending on your teaching area (high-need school, etc.) and availability of funds. Our motto is "Proud to Serve Again," and we encourage retiring military to consider teaching as a second career. Your experience and maturity make you a valuable role model for the youth of America today. The coding on your DD-214 (Member Copy 4) or NGB-22 Form is the critical factor in determining eligibility for funding.

Q – I am a retired officer and I teach JROTC at a public high school. Will I be able to apply for and use TTT funds to obtain a full teaching certification? Do I have to leave JROTC?

A – Possibly. Teaching generally requires that you be a state certified teacher. Eligible TTT participants who receive a TTT stipend to reimburse certification costs incur a three-year teaching obligation. Additionally, some states count certain JROTC courses as academic credit toward graduation and require their JROTC instructors to be certified teacher. JROTC instructors who must become certified and receive a TTT stipend or a TTT teaching bonus also incur a three-year teaching obligation

Q – I was honorably discharged from the Air Force in 1993 and have received my bachelor's degree. I have 8 years 4 months time in service. Am I eligible to apply for funding under this program?

A – No. However, if you join a Selected Reserve unit, you may apply for the program when you reach 10 years of total service, as long as you commit to an additional three years in the Selected Reserve and meet the education requirements for TTT.

Q – Does the six-year minimum service requirement include Service Academy Time?

A – Yes, time spent at a Service Academy is considered active duty and would count towards the six year requirement.

Q – Are waivers or exceptions available for less than 6 years service with an honorable discharge?

A – We are bound by the limitations of the law and do not offer waivers or exceptions.

Procedures for Registering in the Troops to Teachers Program:

Q – Where may I obtain a TTT registration form?

A – You may download the form from our Internet Home Page (<http://www.proudtoserveagain.com>), call TTT at DSN 922-1241, toll-free 1-800-231-6242, or email the TTT home office (ttt@navy.mil). TTT's core office hours are 0700 – 1600, Central Time, Monday - Friday.

Q – Where should I send my TTT registration form?

A – The Troops to Teachers national office in Pensacola, Florida. The address is on the form.

Q – May I submit a "copy" of the registration or must it be an original?

A – The registrant's original signature is required. Other than the signature, copies of documents are acceptable as long as they are legible.

Q – By submitting a signed registration, am I obligating myself to anything?

A – No, however you are certifying that all information on the form is true and correct and authorizing the release of your information to school districts for referral purposes.

Q – I sent my registration form to TTT but was told that I forgot some supporting documents. What are the supporting documents?

A – The copy of the blank Registration Form may be downloaded from the home page as a [PDF](#) file, or received from TTT via U. S. Mail. The form contains a page entitled, "Definitions of Supporting Documents Required to Register with the Troops to Teachers Program" and a checklist of what must be mailed in. Contact us at ttt@navy.mil if you have additional questions.

Q – Must I request original documents from each source office?

A – No. However, it is important that you mail clean legible copies rather than relying on FAX copies. FAX copies sometimes do not arrive. Additionally, they are often unreadable and create a paper management problem. Photocopies of college transcripts are acceptable so long as the text is readable. If not, please provide original transcripts.

Financial Questions:

Q – If I am eligible for a stipend, may I take my certification courses from a private school?

A – Regionally accredited institutions are the recognized sources of certification programs. However, we recommend you check with your state TTT officer to verify the certification program will be recognized by the state.

Q – Is the financial assistance (stipend or bonus) a loan that must be repaid?

A – No. Both are one-time assistance. The stipend covers actual expenses incurred in becoming certified, up to \$5,000. Bonus awards are \$10,000. The combined total of the stipend and bonus per individual may not exceed \$10,000. Both stipends and bonuses are taxable.

There are conditions that must be met (agreed to by signing the Memorandum of Agreement when applying for financial assistance). If the terms are not met, you would be required to repay all or part of the financial assistance. The conditions include but are not limited to:

1. Completing three years employment at a targeted school/school district.
2. For RC-2 and RC-4 participants, completing three additional years (or until eligible for retirement) of Selected Reserve service.

Q – What types of expenses will the stipend reimburse?

A – We are allowed to reimburse expenses that you incur after the date on which you are accepted into the TTT program. They must be directly related to a teacher certification program, or apply to courses leading to teacher certification or teaching endorsements leading to a current teacher's certification. Below is a list of eligible expenses:

1. Tuition – If you are working toward another degree while pursuing your teacher's license, include only those courses that are directly related to teacher certification.
2. Books and materials – for coursework only, not for student teaching. Computer and software are not eligible expenses.
3. Fees – Certification fees, testing fees, and fingerprinting, if it is required by the state.
4. Lodging for out-of-town seminars, testing and other certification requirements.
5. Childcare
6. Transportation – 58.5 cents per mile at this date (subject to change)

Ineligible expenses – expenses that we may not reimburse – are those expenses that were incurred prior to your eligibility date, computers, software, sports equipment, meals, or additional degrees that do not result in teacher certification. We are also not allowed to reimburse for certification, endorsements, or endorsements in areas other than teaching, e.g., administration or counseling.

Q – May I use the TTT financial assistance in addition to Pell Grant and/or GI Bill funding?

A – Yes.

Q – I will be awarded my bachelor's degree and retire simultaneously. Upon my retirement, I will be certified to teach. Will I be eligible for stipend money?

A – Possibly, if you seek an additional certification beyond the one that you are earning with your bachelor's degree.

Q – I am in school but will retire before I receive my bachelor's degree. Am I eligible for financial assistance from TTT?

A - If you have at least the equivalent of one year of college, you may be eligible for expenses related to vocational certification. However, we cannot cover expenses related to the acquisition of one's first baccalaureate degree or academic teacher certification expenses prior to award of the baccalaureate degree. Once you have received your baccalaureate degree, you may apply for a stipend up to \$5K to reimburse the post-baccalaureate costs of becoming a certified K-12 teacher. A maximum of \$5K is available for K-12 certification expenses; academic or vocational.

Q – I submitted my registration package. What happens now?

A – You will receive a letter confirming or denying your eligibility. If you are only eligible for counseling and referral services, that fact will be stated. If you are eligible to apply for a Stipend and/ or Bonus, an information sheet and the appropriate application information will be in the package. As you complete the steps in becoming certified, obtain a teaching position, and return the required Stipend or Bonus packets, funds will be deposited to your account.

Questions about Becoming a Teacher:

Q – What if I am not sure I want to be a teacher?

A – The best way to know for sure is to gain some practical experience. Volunteer in a public school at the grade level and in the subject area in which you want to teach.

Q – I have heard that a person has to be certified to teach. What does that mean?

A – Each state requires that public school teachers meet certain educational standards. The teacher certification agency in each state's Department of Education is the best source for specific information. Direct links to the states' certification offices may be found at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/StateCertInfo.asp. Our TTT state offices can also help you determine certification requirements for the states that they represent. See http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/State_Office_Listing.pdf for contact information.

Q – Do substitute teachers have to be certified?

A – Some states require that substitute teachers be certified to teach, but most do not. Substituting allows the district to become aware of your teaching abilities and offers you the opportunity to become acquainted with the system. Our TTT state offices can give you guidance. See http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/State_Office_Listing.pdf for contact information.

Q – What are starting teachers paid?

A – The [American Federation of Teachers](#) cited an average beginning teacher salary in 2004-2005 of \$31,753.00. In some districts, veterans receive an automatic longevity pay boost when they are hired. For current salary info, inquire with the districts in which you are interested in teaching. For the school year 2004-2005, the national average for K-12 salaries was \$45,771.

Teacher Certification Questions:

Q – I submitted my registration package, and my eligibility has been confirmed. How will TTT help me become certified?

A – The answer has several parts.

1. Links to the states' certification agencies may be found on the TTT homepage at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/StateCertInfo.asp
2. Part of the TTT home page, TTT Step-by-Step, at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/TTTStepByStep.asp, contains specific suggestions for becoming certified.

3. Our TTT state offices can also help you determine certification requirements for the states that they represent and offer suggestions regarding the best means of accomplishing your goals. See http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/State_Office_Listing.pdf for contact information.
4. Current TTT participants who are already teaching act as mentors in many states and offer advice regarding how to proceed. See the mentor list at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/mentor/mentor1.asp?graphic=1.

Q – Is a teaching certificate required to be hired as a full time teacher?

A – Not necessarily. Many states have a certificate that is referred to as an “alternative teaching certificate” that can be issued to an individual based on the applicant's academic background and the state's immediate need to hire someone. In addition, participants in many states can be hired as vocational/technical teachers based on their skill levels without having a current vocational/technical teaching certificate. Because of the No Child left Behind Act, fewer states allow one to teach without being fully certified.

Q – What does fully certified mean?

A – This can vary greatly among the states. (1) In general, you must have proven knowledge in the subject matter that you teach. Possessing a baccalaureate or higher degree in the required subject or sometimes by completing a certain number of courses in the subject or passing state-approved subject matter tests may suffice. (2) Most states also require that you complete certain education classes as well as a period of practice teaching. (3) In many states, you must teach three to five years before permanent certification is awarded. To be sure, check with the respective [TTT state office](#) or [state certification agency](#).

Q – What if the state in which I want to teach has no “alternative teaching certificate”?

A – You will be required to either complete an entire teacher preparation program in a college or university, or take selected courses to meet your ‘deficiency’ in required academic areas.

Q – How do I find a teacher certification program?

A – Contact the TTT POC to request a list of certification programs. Or contact the respective State Department of Education, Office of Certification. Once you’ve decided where you plan to locate after leaving the military, you can check with the local college or university that offers teacher preparation courses. The topic of Alternative Certification is discussed in greater depth at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/altcert/tco.asp, which also contains a link to the National Association for Alternative Certification. The TTT home page also lists several distance-based certification programs.

Q – In what states can I find a Troops to Teachers office?

A – TTT offices cover forty-nine of the fifty states. Where no state TTT office exists, consult with the TTT office in neighboring states. A TTT state office listing may be found at http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/ttt/State_Office_Listing.pdf.

NOTE: See our Home Page on the Internet for complete TTT information at (<http://ProudToServeAgain.com>) or call our offices at DSN 922-1241, toll-free 1-800-231-6242, commercial 850-452-1241. E-mail may be sent to TTT at ttt@navy.mil.